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I fully support the nonviolent disarmament witness that took place in the United States on November 2, 2009 to begin to disarm the Trident nuclear weapons. The first strike Trident nuclear missiles are a threat to all nations, including South Africa.

During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa we often used civil resistance and other nonviolent methods. These methods are equally relevant when it comes to the struggle against war and nuclear weapons.

We know that nations need teachers, schools, books, drinking water, productive farm land, food and shelter. We do not need weapons of war, and we do not need nuclear weapons which threaten to destroy all of God's creation. That is why we in South Africa disarmed and dismantled our nuclear weapons in 1989.

If we are to believe the words of our faith, "to love our enemies", then we must begin to disarm our nuclear weapons. If we believe that every life is sacred, that every person is a child of God, then we cannot bomb their villages and cities with nuclear warheads. The Plowshares movement, a movement of people who take responsibility for the nuclear weapons of their country, and who believe that disarmament is the way to abolish nuclear weapons, is a light in the darkness of the war making around us. I support William Bichsel, SJ; Anne Montgomery, RSCH; Steve Kelly, SJ; Lynne Greenwald and Susan Crane in their efforts to unmask and disarm the first strike nuclear weapons at the Naval Base Kitsap in Washington State in the US.

I continue to pray for peace along with all who work for peace with justice.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu (Cape Town – South Africa)

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God - if there is this love among you, then all will know that you are my disciples."

From Lompoc, CA, by Fr. Louie Vitale

Posted on June 5, 2010

From *the Nuclear Resister* #157, June 1, 2010)

February 25, 2010

How Can I Cope?

Many people who write me – friends and supporters – ask about harsh treatment and brutality. I do not deny that in many prisons and jails these conditions do exist. One can even raise the charge of torture. In regards to myself I have not experienced such conditions. Hardships, yes, but not brutality or violence.

The hardships begin with the loss of freedom. I remember during my first incarceration, after having made pastoral visits in jail to prisoners, it was a shock as I realized the cell doors were closed and locked on me.

Jails are usually cold – or too hot – mats are hard, and not always present (as in the District of Columbia Central Cellblock), food is sometimes scarce and tasteless, clothes are inadequate (no coats or even underwear), they don't fit, are not clean. Medical care may be hard to access, and not adequate, especially with serious needs. TVs are loud and almost always on. The noise can be horrific, even through the night. Then there is the isolation from family and friends. Phone calls are difficult and expensive. Visiting is restricted, mostly through glass, and more and more over in-house video systems.

People ask, "How do you cope?"

Especially since most of my time in recent years has been for protesting torture, experienced by those subject to School of the Americas graduates, Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram, the U.S.-run prison in Afghanistan that is replacing Gitmo for its brutality. If this dulls the imagination there are the continuing renditions to countries that practice even more blatant torture. This goes on throughout the world.

If I start to feel sorry for myself I think of the suffering experienced in these and other horrific situations from slavery to executions. How can I really complain? Yes, it may well be called for to file complaints or act to have rules, regulations, and practices changed as has happened at Guantanamo Bay and by prison reform groups which expose such practices. Personally I question the whole prison system. As labor leader Eugene Debs said, "So long as there is a soul in prison, I am not free." But when I think about these situations (often at night in bed), I am able to cope with my own deprivations.

Even more significant for me is to use these experiences and reflections to create empathy with all of those who suffer these horrific experiences. We are all part of this created world. Each person is sister and brother to me. Their suffering is my sorrow as well.

Gandhi's Principles of Nonviolence

All life is one.

We each have a piece of the truth and the un-truth.

Human beings are more than the evil they sometimes commit.

The means must be consistent with the ends.

We are called to celebrate both our differences *and* our fundamental unity with others.

We reaffirm our unity with others when we transform “us” versus “them” thinking and doing.

Our oneness calls us to want, and to work for, the well-being of all.

The nonviolent journey is a process of becoming increasingly free from fear.

Plowshares breach nuclear weapon stronghold at Naval Base Kitsap – Bangor, Washington State

Base on high alert and closed for 6 hours

Disarm Now Plowshares, November 2, 2009

Bill “Bix” Bichsel, S.J., of Tacoma, Washington; Susan Crane, of Baltimore MD; Lynne Greenwald, of Bremerton Washington; Steve Kelly, S.J., of Oakland, CA.; Anne Montgomery RSCJ, of New York, New York, were arrested on Naval Base Kitsap- Bangor at the largest nuclear weapon storage area in the US.

They entered the base in the early morning hours of November 2, 2009, All Souls Day, to call attention to the illegality and immorality of the existence of the first strike Trident weapons system. They entered through the perimeter fence, and walked through the base for four hours. During that time they made their way to the Strategic Weapons Facility – Pacific (SWFPAC) where they cut through the first chain link fence surrounding SWFPAC. They then walked to and cut the next double layered fence, both chain link and barbed wire, and entered the grounds of SWFPAC. This bunker area holds the largest nuclear weapon stockpile in the United States.

As they walked they held a banner saying..... “Disarm Now Plowshares: Trident: Illegal and Immoral”. The Plowshares activists knew that they were in a shoot to kill zone, but they also remembered the many people who live in shoot to kill zones all the time because of US occupation of their country.

The unarmed activists were then held on the ground face down, handcuffed and hooded for over three hours. They were carried out, still hooded, through the very holes in the fence that they had made, and questioned by FBI and NCIS for several hours.

Although they gave only their names, they were given Ban and Bar letters and citations for trespass and destruction of government property. There was no court date on the citations, and although the plowshares activists didn’t sign the citations, they were released after being questioned for over five hours.

In a joint statement, the group stated that “The manufacture and deployment of Trident II missiles, weapons of mass destruction, is immoral and criminal under International Law and, therefore, under United States law. As U.S. citizens we are responsible under the Nuremberg Principles for this threat of first-strike terrorism hanging over the community of nations, rich and poor. Moreover, such planning, preparation, and deployment is a blasphemy against the Creator of life, imaged in each human being.”

There have been approximately 100 Plowshares Nuclear Resistance Actions worldwide since 1980. Plowshares actions are taken from Isaiah 2:4 in Old Testament (Hebrew) scripture of the Christian Bible, “God will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many people.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects. The dangers from such weapons arise from their very existence. Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare—in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—about 26,000 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date. Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge.

The United Nations has sought to eliminate such weapons ever since its establishment. The first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946 established a Commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy among others. The Commission was to make proposals for, *inter alia*, the control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes. The resolution also decided that the Commission should make proposals for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction."

A number of multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests In The Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water, also known as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force.

A number of bilateral and plurilateral treaties and arrangements seek to reduce or eliminate certain categories of nuclear weapons, to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their delivery vehicles. These range from several treaties between the United States of America and Russian Federation as well as various other initiatives, to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

In Support of Protest by Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen

Posted on July 19, 2010 by Disarm Now Plowshares

from *For Swords into Plowshares, the Hammer Has to Fall* edited by Daniel Berrigan, S.J. Although this Pentecost reflection was written around 1984, it is still relevant today.

I have decided to be a witness in the trials of several persons arrested while they were engaged in non-violent protest of the deployment of the Trident weapons system. I have made this decision for two reasons. First, I wish to voice both my admiration and support for those who, at great personal cost, continue to remind us of our moral responsibility for the presence of these horrifying weapons in our midst. Secondly, I believe this is an important opportunity for me to reflect with the Church in this community on principles important to our common vocation to be peacemakers.

It is my understanding that, in their defense, the protesters not only cite the principle that the claims of conscience are superior to the claims of civil law, but also the principle that we owe an allegiance to all of the human family which goes beyond loyalty to the nation state. Therefore, the tenets of international law, including the common law of human kind, supercede the law of any nation when the two are in conflict. I wish to focus on the second principle enunciated here because I believe it goes to the heart of the matter. For only the individual is bound by the dictates of individual conscience, but I believe that we are all morally bound to take seriously the common laws of humanity.

The idea that we are all bound by reciprocal rights and obligations to all our brothers and sisters has long been a central theme in Catholic social teaching. This teaching is echoed in the principles that were applied by the United States at the Nuremberg trials. Applied, I might point out, in the trial of officials who failed the test of this standard in a situation hauntingly similar to the situation we face today as citizens of the United States. This teaching is clearly restated and elaborated in our recently completed pastoral on nuclear war, *The Challenge of Peace*:

"The Creator has provided this world and all its resources for the sustenance and benefit of the entire human family. The truth that the globe is inhabited by a single family in which all have the same basic needs and all have a right to the goods of the earth is a fundamental principle of Catholic teaching which we believe to be of increasing importance." (p. 95)

In applying this principle to the roles of the citizen in the United States today, we go on to state in our pastoral letter:

"The virtue of patriotism means that as citizens we respect and honor our country, but our very love and loyalty makes us examine carefully and regularly its role in world affairs, asking that it live up to its full potential as an agent of peace with justice for all people."

We then quote the relevant passage from *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* from Vatican II:

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More on Nuclear
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Jonah House

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Trident submarines serve as the sea based nuclear launch system of the Air, Land, and Sea Nuclear Triad supported by the US government. The U.S. currently has 14 nuclear-powered Trident ballistic-missile (SSBN) submarines. Trident submarines are 560 feet in length, or nearly two football fields. Each submarine can carry 24 submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) designated Trident D5 and each missile can carry up to eight 100 kiloton nuclear warheads (about 30 times the explosive force as the Hiroshima bomb).

The Trident D5 missile stands 44.6 feet high and originally had a range of 4,230 nautical miles with a full load of warheads, and up to 6000+ nautical miles with a reduced load of warheads. Upgrades and Life Extension Programs may have changed some specifications. Warheads are either Mark-4/W76 or Mark-5/W88.

100 : Number of kilotons on ONE Trident W76 warhead

455: Number of kilotons on ONE Trident W88 warhead

345,600: Total number of kilotons deployed on Trident fleet

14: Number of kilotons on atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima

150,000: Number of people killed by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima

1,028 minimum; 4,885 maximum: Number of potential "Hiroshimas" each Trident is capable of destroying

\$66,000,000: Price of ONE Trident II D5 missile

14: Number of nuclear-armed submarines the Navy wants to deploy through 2042

\$60,000,000: Cost of health insurance for 60,000 children

\$10,000,000,000: Annual cost of providing sanitary water to 2.4 billion people worldwide who now lack it

\$59,000,000,000: Cost of building housing for 6000,000 homeless

families in the US

\$170,200,000,000 (low estimate) : Total cost of the ENTIRE Trident program through year 2042

Naval Submarine Base Kitsap-Bangor is located 20 miles west of Seattle on the deep waters of Hood Canal in Washington State. It is the home to the largest single stockpile of nuclear warheads in the U.S. arsenal, housing more than 2,000 nuclear warheads. This is approximately 24% of the entire U.S. arsenal. The Bangor Base presently houses more nuclear warheads than the countries of England, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea combined.

There are eight Tridents based at the Bangor Base; six operate out of Kings Bay, GA. The Trident submarines at Bangor are likely to be used first in any nuclear attack, either as an isolated tactical assault on a specific site, bunker, or weapons location, or in a larger strategic nuclear attack. The D5 missile is capable of traveling over 1,370 miles in less than 13 minutes, allowing for a US nuclear strike anywhere on planet earth within 15 minutes.

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